

Remarks

I. Status of Claims

Claims 9-13, 21-30, and 36-39 are pending.

Claims 11-13, 21-26, 30, and 38 have been allowed.

II. Claim rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Examiner has rejected claims 9, 10, 27-29, 36, 37, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Watson (U.S. 3,847,718) in view of Kuramoto (U.S. 2003/0063963).

The instant application is a divisional of prior U.S. Application No. 09/721,549, which has issued as U.S. Patent No. 6,739,816 (see the "Request for a Continuing Application under 37 CFR 1.53(b)" and the "Preliminary Amendment" which were filed on April 7, 2004, in the instant application). As a consequence of this priority claim, the instant application is afforded an effective filing date of November 24, 2000. The earliest possible effective filing date of Kuramoto is November 24, 2000. Since the earliest possible effective filing date of Kuramoto is not before the effective filing date of the instant application, Kuramoto cannot qualify as prior art with respect to the claims of the instant application.

Since the rejection of each of claims 9, 10, 27-29, 36, 37, and 39 relies on the disclosure of Kuramoto, which is not prior art, the rejection of claims 9, 10, 27-29, 36, 37, and 39 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Watson in view of Kuramoto should be withdrawn.

III. Conclusion

For the reasons explained above, all of the pending claims are now in condition for allowance and should be allowed.

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Serial No. : 10/820,649
Filed : April 7, 2004
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Attorney's Docket No.: 10002621-2
Amendment dated: Aug. 29, 2007
Reply to Office action dated: July 27, 2007

Respectfully submitted,

Date: August 29, 2007



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